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Dr. *ROBERT VYNER's*

Very Extraordinary

EXCISE SERMON

Preached on *Wedneſday*, *March* 14, 1732,

At a Noted CHAPEL in *Weſtminſter*.

[redacted]

BRITISH MUSEUM

A very LONG,

CURIOUS AND EXTRAORDINARY

SERMON;

Preached on *Wednesday, March* 14, 1732,

AT

A noted CHAPEL in *Westminster*,

From these Words of *St. Luke*, C. ii. V. 1.

And it came to pass in those Days that a DECREE *went out, that all the World should be* TAXED.

WITH

Some Practical OBSERVATIONS and USES fitted to the present Times.

By ROBERT VYNER, D.D.

and

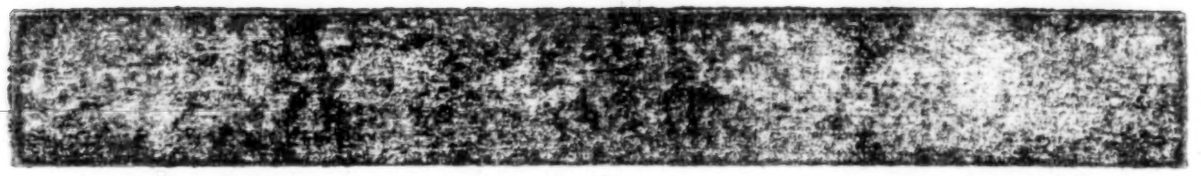
Rector of the said Chapel.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for [illegible] Dring, *at the Office in the* Old Jewry, *and sold by* [illegible] James, *near* Devereux-Court, *without* Temple-Bar. MDCCXXXIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM



LUKE, CHAP. ii. VER. 1.

And it came to paſs, in thoſe Days, that there went out a DECREE, *that all the World ſhould be* TAXED.

THE foregoing Words, *my Friends and Brethren*, with the two Verſes immediately following, ſeem to be a kind of Prediction, or Type, of what was to befal us, or, at leaſt, of what was to be attempted, in theſe latter Days; and the more I conſider them, the more I am confirmed in this Thought, which made me pitch upon them as the propereſt Text that I could poſſibly chuſe out on this Occaſion.

For, in the firſt Place, by particular Notice being taken in this Chapter of the *Decree* that was iſſued out at this Time, it ſhews, that *this Decree* was of a very particular Nature; now, as it is not to be ſuppoſed, that there were no Taxes before throughout the *Roman* Empire, it amounts to a Demonſtration that *this Tax* was of a very particular Sort; and this we ſhall ſee as we go farther.

The next Obſervation is, that *all the World was to be Taxed*; that is to ſay, all the *Roman* World; or in other Words, all the *Subjects* of the *Roman* Empire: This ſhews that this *Tax* affected all the *Roman People*, of all Degrees and Denominations, and where-ever diſperſed.

In the third Place, it is obſerved in the next Verſe, that *this Tax was firſt made when* Cyrenius *was Governor of* Syria. From hence we may remark two Things; namely, that this TAX was *unprecedented* before, and that this *Cyrenius* (upon whom the Evangeliſt ſeems to have fixed a *Note of Infamy*, that his *Name* might be tranſmitted down therewith to Poſterity to the End of the World) was an *Inventer* of *new Taxes* to *harreſs* and *oppreſs* the People; and conſequently was guilty of the moſt enormous *Male Adminiſtration*. For, I would fain ask, to what Purpoſe was his Name mentioned, if he was not the *Adviſer* or *Projector* of this TAX?

In the third Verſe 'tis ſaid, *And all went to be taxed, every one to his own City*. This ſhews the Nature of the *Tax*, that it was quite different from all other *Duties* and *Impoſts*; for whereas they were gathered by the *Roman Tax Gatherers*, whom the *Jews branded*, by way of Ignominy, with the Name of *Publicans*, looking upon them as a Set of *infamous Raſcals*, and the *Baſe* of human Society; here every one went to be *taxed* into his own City; that is to ſay, in other Words, every one was forced to carry his Money to the *Exciſe Office*. For, the *Exciſe* has this in particular above all other Taxes beſides

numberleſs

numberless other Hardships! that every one is obliged to carry the Badge of his Slavery, I mean, that every Man is obliged to carry his *Quota* to the next *Excise Office*, the Officers not vouchsafing to collect the Money at the Peoples Houses.

Having thus laid down to you, *my Friends and Brethren*, some few Observations upon this *extraordinary*, this *unprecedented* TAX; I shall now proceed to divide my Text into four general Heads, upon which I shall enlarge as proper; after which, I shall go on to the Use and Application, and conclude the whole with a *serious Exhortation* to all here present.

Come we then first to the Words, *And it came to pass*: In treating of those Words, I shall consider, *1st*, *What came to pass*; *2dly*, *Where it came to pass*; and *3dly*, *When it came to pass*.

First then, as to the first, *It came to pass that a* Decree *went out, that the* whole World should be TAXED. What! no less than the *whole World*, or, to speak more properly, the whole *Roman* Empire, at one Time! How insatiable is the *Love of Riches and Oppression in some People!* What an immense Sum must such a Tax raise! And for what End could it possibly be wanted! Undoubtedly to *gorge* the *Avarice* of some Court Harpies, amongst whom, very probably, this *Cyrenius* might be the Ringleader; as also to keep up *a flagitious Body of Troops, to awe the* Roman *People, who are naturally impatient of Slavery.*

Secondly, *Where did this come to pass?* Why, the Answer is easy: It was in the *Roman* Empire, where the Will of the Emperor was an absolute Law, and where the Senate were corrupted, and grown no more than a mere empty Name, a mere Cypher: For whilst the *Roman Senate* preserved their Liberty, VAIN were all *Attempts* to ENSLAVE them, and the rash Wretch who would have run the Risque, either *openly to attack*, and by *plausible Pretences to undermine their Liberties*, would have paid, with his Head, the *Forfeit of his impious Undertaking.*

Thirdly, Let us consider, *When this came to pass?* Why, in the Reign of *Augustus Cæsar*, who was reckoned a good Prince; when the Temple of *Janus* was shut; when all the World was in a *profound Peace*; and, consequently, when there could be no manner of reasonable Pretence for thus *burdening* and *oppressing* the People; in short, when it was *visible* that it was only a Desire of the *Court Leeches*, to *aggrandize themselves*, and their *Dependants*. How exactly have too many copied after them? Proceed we now to the second general Head, *In those Days*.

I have already touched upon this, partly under the foregoing Head; that is to say, I have observed, that it was in the Reign of *Augustus*, who was reckoned a good Prince, and at a Time when the whole World was in Peace: but the Subject is so copious, that I must beg leave to enlarge a little upon it, and am perswaded, that my Observations will not be unacceptable to my Hearers.

It is notoriously known, that as the *Bee sucks Honey* from every *Flower*, so the *Toad* sucks *Poison* from every Herb or Plant whatsoever, be it ever so fragrant; just so it is with a good and an evil Minister: The former, in the unfortunate Situation of Affairs, the greatest Difficulties and Embarrassments

The *EXCISE* SERMON.

While I am upon this Head, *my Brethren*, I cannot help obſerving, that this Saying of *Jugurtha*'s did not only hold true of the Republick of *Rome*, but ever did, and ever will, hold equally true of all other States to the End of the World; for nothing is more certain, than that, if the *leading Members* of any State will be *corrupted*, that *State* is *ripe* for *Deſtruction*: How much ought we to return Thanks, and to bleſs Heaven, that we are not in that miſerable Caſe!

Proceed we now to the fourth general Head, which is, *That all the World ſhould be* TAXED: This was heavy Tidings, *my Brethren*, at a Time of univerſal Peace; what could they have expected more in a Time of War? But I begin very much to ſuſpect that there were a great many *Penſioners* among the *Roman Senators* which might make this TAX *neceſſary*, for *Penſioners* muſt be *paid*, or elſe they will ſoon *turn Tail*: Perhaps alſo, *my Friends*, SECRET SERVICE MONEY might be then in Faſhion, and then I don't at all wonder that *all the World* was TAXED; I ſhould rather wonder that *one* TAX *ſufficed*. Oh! *my Brethren*, that ſame SECRET SERVICE is a *bottomleſs Gulph* that will *devour* every Thing; the Lord alone knows what it will *devour*, but you and I ſhall never know, if *ſome Folk* can help it. Had it been known in *Solomon*'s Days, he would certainly have added it to his Catalogue of Things that are *inſatiable*. Oh! *my Brethren*, it is a *dangerous Weapon* in the Hands of a *corrupt*, *ſelfiſh* Man; ſuch a *Weapon*, as deſtroys more than a *two-edged Sword*. But perhaps, *my Brethren*, ſome of you may ask, *Which Way doth it deſtroy?* To this I ſhall anſwer; that it deſtroys by the worſt of Deaths, even by Famine: For one would hardly think it, but 'tis true, that bottomleſs Gulph hath been known to ſwallow up, in one Morning, as much as would have maintain'd a thouſand Families for ever.

Having thus gone thro' the four general Heads of my Text, I ſhall beg Leave to take a little Notice of the ſubſequent Verſes, ſo far as they relate thereunto. *Firſt* then, it is ſaid, that *this Taxing was firſt made when* CYRENIUS *was Governor of* Syria. I have already obſerv'd upon this Head, that the mentioning CYRENIUS ſo immediately after the mentioning this TAX, ſeems tacitly deſign'd by the Evangeliſt to fix a *Brand of Infamy* upon him in *ſæcula ſæculorum*, as being the *Author* or *Projector* of this TAX. I am the more confirm'd in this my Opinion, by the Accounts we have, on all Hands, of the Temper of the *Jewiſh Nation*.

According to the moſt authentick Hiſtories we have of them, never were a People more tenacious of their Rights, Liberties, and Cuſtoms, than that haughty Nation; nor need we be aſtoniſhed thereat, ſince they ſtill firmly believe themſelves *God's choſen People*. This Pre-eminence over all the reſt of Mankind, puffed them up with intolerable Pride, filled them with the greateſt Contempt of every Body but themſelves, and made them impatient of the leaſt Controul. It is not then at all ſurpriſing, that St. *Luke*, who, tho' then a Chriſtian, was bred a Jew, and could not diveſt himſelf of his *Love* for his *native Country* (a *Love inherent* in all *honeſt Men*) it is not at all ſurpriſing, I ſay, that he ſhould be willing to *ſtigmatize* the *Man* who was the *Adviſer* of *ſaddling* his Countrymen with an *unprecedented* TAX, in a Time of

Peace

Peace, when *Money* could only be wanted to satiate the *Avarice* of some *Court Minions*, such as himself, and the *hungry Crew* of *Sycophants* that are perpetually *hanging* upon them, and ought, very often, to be *hanged with them*.

Some People will perhaps ask, What Relation the Governor of *Syria* had to the *Jewish* Nation? and, Why he is here mention'd rather than the *Procurator* who then govern'd *Judæa* for the *Romans*? To this I shall answer, That the *Procurator* was only a subordinate Governor under this *Cyrenius*, *Judæa* being, at that Time, only a Province of *Syria*, and as such subject to the *Roman Proconsul*, to whom that *Proconsulate* was allotted. *Cyrenius* then was the propereſt Perſon to be mention'd, as he was the Head-Governor, and muſt be the Perſon who gave Orders for this extraordinary *Taxation*, the *Procurator* not daring to attempt any ſuch Thing without Orders from his Superiors. Proceed we now to the next Verſe.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own City: This lets us into the Nature of the TAX, as I obſerv'd before; for why ſhould every one go to his own City to be *taxed*, if this *Tax* was not different from all other *Impoſts*? The *Jews*, it is evident, paid ſeveral other Duties beſide this, which were all collected by a Set of *Tax Gatherers* whom they called *Publicans*, and whom they held in the utmoſt *Abhorrence* and *Contempt*. This is very viſible from their Behaviour to our *Saviour*, whom, when they would have vilify'd to the laſt Degree, they charge with eating with the *Publicans* and *Sinners*; which was as much (in their Opinion) as to charge him with the worſt of *Rogues* and *Pick-Pockets*. It being undeniable therefore that the *Jews* paid ſeveral other *Duties*, and that *theſe Duties* were differently collected, it will be worth examining, what this TAX muſt be, for the paying of which every one was obliged to go to his own City. In making this Inquiry, it will be neceſſary perhaps to go a little farther, and there we ſhall find, that *Joſeph*, our *Saviour's* reputed Father, according to the Fleſh, went to *Bethlehem*, which was his City, with his Wife *Mary*, who was then big with Child, and was alſo to be *taxed*. We may now, perhaps, be able to make ſome probable Conjectures about the Nature of this *Tax*.

By all the Marks then, that we can diſcover thereof, it muſt be an *Exciſe*, and not only ſo, but a *general Exciſe*; for what elſe could it be, which could affect all the *Roman Empire*? Beſide, we find every one was obliged to go to his own City to be *taxed*; that is to ſay, every one was obliged to go to the neareſt Market-Town, to the *Exciſe-Office*, to carry his *Quota* of the *Exciſe*. Is it not ſo with all the People in the Country, that do not live in Market-Towns, and deal in *exciſeable Commodities*? We find that not even the *Women*, nor *Children* were excepted; which ſhews that this muſt be a TAX upon the *Neceſſaries of Life*, otherwiſe it could not have affected them. Thus have I ſhewn, that, in all Probability, this *unprecedented* TAX was not only an EXCISE, but a GENERAL EXCISE; and, in all likelihood, the *Origines* and Model from whence all *Exciſes* have been deriv'd ever ſince; how much the World was obliged to the pernicious *Adviſer* and *Inventor* thereof I ſhall not pretend to determine, eſpecially at this Juncture.

I leave every one to judge, however, by the preſent Diſpoſition of the *Engliſh* Nation, if they had Power equal to their *Good-will*, no good *Chriſtian* would

with

wish the *worſt Enemy* ſo *ſeverely puniſhed*, as they would puniſh the Projector of any *new Exciſe*, where he delivered up into their Hands. I much queſtion, whether he would meet with a Jot more Mercy than the two *De Witts*. It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that the Fury of the Populace is at an unuſual Height throughout the Kingdom; and ſhould any thing happen to inflame them yet more, Heaven alone knows where their Fury would ſtop, but of this more hereafter, when we come to Uſe and Application. Return we now to the Words of our Text, *And it came to paſs in thoſe Days, that a* Decree *went out, that all the World ſhould be* Taxed.

I obſerved, *my Brethren*, upon theſe Words, at the Beginning of this Diſcourſe, that they ſeemed to me a Prophecy, or at leaſt a Type of what was to befall us, or to be attempted in theſe our Days. For, almoſt every Circumſtance concurs to make the TAX laid in thoſe Days bear the greateſt Reſemblance to that intended to be laid at preſent, as will be eaſily ſeen, when we come to examine into both, and compare the one with the other.

Firſt, The former was laid in the Time of a *profound Peace*, when there could be no plauſible Pretence for *raiſing freſh Supplies by new Exciſes* and *Impoſts*. And are not we now in a *profound Peace*; can there be any reaſonable Excuſe for *raiſing freſh Subſidies*, or *laying new Exciſes*? The concurring Teſtimony of the whole Kingdom ſay *No*.

Secondly, The former was an unprecedented TAX, and not collected by the uſual Tax Gatherers, but every one was obliged to go to his own City to be Taxed: And pray is not ours precedent; will it be collected in the uſual Manner, and will not every one that deals in *Wines* and *Tobacco*, be obliged to repair to the neareſt *Exciſe Office* to pay his *Quota*?

Thirdly, The former affected all the World; by which is meant, the whole *Roman* Empire. And will there be an Individual, Man, Woman, or Child, in this Kingdom, but will be affected ſome Way or other by the Exciſe upon ſome of theſe Commodities?

Fourthly, The former Taxing was firſt made when *Cyrenius* was Governor of *Syria*: And was this Exciſe ever ſo much as thought of (in a *Time of Peace*) but ſince the Adminiſtration of a certain *very honourable Perſon*, who has the Glory of being thought the *Projector*? 'Tis true the Type fails here in one Point; which is, that *Cyrenius* was a Foreigner to the *Jews*, and the Governor of a conquered Province; whereas our *Cyrenius* pretends inſtantly to be a *True Britan*, but a *great Friend to his Country*.

All theſe Circumſtances conſidered then, *my Brethren*, I believe I may defy any one to produce a more exact Type of any Event that is paſt. 'Tis to be hoped, however, that the Type may again fail in another Point, and that a very eſſential one; I mean, that the *Projector* ſhall not be able to carry his Point, and that we ſhall be ſaddled with no more Exciſes. There are, thank Heaven, certain Bounds ſet to all our Actions, and as only Providence which can put a Stop to the Raging of the Sea, can likewiſe put a Stop to the *Fury* and *Succeſs* of any *impious Man*; otherwiſe we muſt ſee the whole *Kingdom overthrown* by the *hair brain'd Ambition* of *blundering Stateſmen*, who, with no other Recommendation than *Impudence*, has had the Luck to infinuate themſelves into their Prince's Favour. No, *my Friends*, the Subverſion of Kingdoms are not Things of ſuch light Moment, that they ſhould be [illegible] ſound

doned by the Almighty to the giddy Hand of Chance, unleſs it be at his own appointed Time, when he has left a People to themſelves as a Puniſhment for their Sins; in which Caſe he ſometimes raiſes up *Giants* in *Wickedneſs* to be their *Scourge*, and *laſh* them for their Follies; nor need they a more ſevere one, than *blundering over-reaching Statesmen*, who has the Power to execute whatever their *Inſolence* or *Ignorance* puts into their Heads.

But before a State can come into this forlorn Condition; before it can be ſo abandoned by Providence, and left deſtitute of human Help, there muſt have been a continued Series of Iniquity amongſt the People; in ſhort, the People muſt have *abandoned themſelves*. To apply this:

We are now, *my Brethren*, under the greateſt Apprehenſions of a *new Exciſe*; I will not call it a *general Exciſe*, becauſe there ſhall be no Cavils, tho' it is certain that it has a great Tendency that Way, I chuſe therefore to call it a *new Exciſe*. As we are therefore, *my Brethren*, under the greateſt Apprehenſions of this *new Exciſe*, let us, every Man lay his Hand upon his Heart, and conſider, whether there has been no flagrant Sin amongſt ourſelves, which has drawn down this ſevere Judgment upon us.

I am afraid, *my Brethren*, there has been a *Snake in the Graſs*; what elſe could make us ſo diſtruſtful of our REPRESENTATIVES, choſen (or at leaſt they ought to be ſo) by our own *Free Votes*, to ſend up *Petition* after *Petition*, what elſe could make us ſo diſtruſtful of them, as to imagine they would *neglect us*, and needed a SPUR on ſo *important an Occaſion*? To ſpeak openly and plainly, have we not ſome Reaſon to think they are not our *Repreſentatives* but their own? I am afraid, *my Brethren*, by this Time you begin to feel yourſelves *ſturdy*.

Have you received *the Wages of Iniquity*, and thereby made yourſelves, like the *Gibeonites*, *Hewers of Wood*, and *Drawers of Water*? Have you, like *Achan*, partaken of the *accurſed Thing*? In ſhort, have you received *Bribes* from thoſe who ought to be your *Repreſentatives*, but who, if they have bought you, are really there own? If this is the Caſe, I am afraid, *my Brethren*, you will have no body but yourſelves to thank if the *New Exciſe Bill* ſhould paſs.

How would you like it all and each of you, if you ſhould have this Anſwer retorted to you which was ſent by a *certain Gentleman* to his Electors.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am very much ſurpriſed at your *Inſolence* in offering to direct me how to proceed in *Parliament*. I want no Advice, at leaſt none of yours. Don't you know that I bought you? and you may depend upon it I will ſell you again. I will be ſo generous as to tell you one Thing which you think I don't know; that is, that you are now *treating* with another Gentleman to *repreſent* you againſt next *Election*: I will likewiſe tell you another Thing which you don't know, and I know, which is, that I am treating with another *Borough* where I am ſure of being choſen: ſo wiſhing your *Wives* and *Daughters* may be as *common as Exciſemen*, as I found them when I ſtood Candidate. I tell you very plainly what you have to depend upon from

Your no Friend,

This

This Gentleman, in my Opinion, was an *honeſt Man*; he told his Electors the *Truth*; he told them what they had to truſt to: but would ſuch an Anſwer be agreeable to you, *my Brethren?* Would you like ſuch a *Home Truth?* I am ſure you will ſay NO. Let me then ask you, when you gave your Votes for *Hire*, what elſe you could expect? Could you expect, in this *worſe* than *brazen Age*, that any Gentleman would give you Money if he intended to ſerve you? In former Times the People uſed to *pay* their Members for their Trouble in *repreſenting* them; what ſhould occaſion ſo vaſt a Difference that they ſhould now *pay* you? 'Tis eaſily anſwer'd; there was then ſuch a Thing as *Honour*, *Probity*, and *Integrity*, and there were then no *Penſions* nor *Places* to give to thoſe who would *forfeit theſe Virtues*: Beſides, *common Honeſty* was not *quite laugh'd out of Doors*; an *Engliſhman* valued himſelf upon his LIBERTY, and the King of *England* was the greateſt Prince in *Chriſtendom*, as he was King of MEN, and not of SLAVES.

Methinks I ſee a generous Indignation now boiling up, *my Brethren*, in your Breaſts; and you are ready to ask, Who *are*, and who *would be* SLAVES? I'll allow, no-body at preſent, but no Thanks to yourſelves if my Surmiſes ſhould prove true; but ſhould a *leſs generous Monarch*, and a *leſs upright Miniſter* ariſe in *future Times*, as we are all *mortal*, what would be the Event of *univerſal Corruption?* Why what elſe can but *univerſal Slavery* and *wooden Shoes*. A certain Set of Writers ſeem to have long *lamented* that we ſtill wear *Leather*, and that even notwithſtanding a DOUBLE EXCISE, firſt, on *Raw Hides*, and ſecond, after *Tanning*.

While I am upon this Head, I cannot forbear owning, that I don't know but WOOD may be more wholeſome for the Soles of the Feet than *Leather*, and while ſome Gentlemen are ſo zealouſly conſulting our *Healths*, and are ſo anxious about our *Welfare*, I am not certain that ſuch a *Regulation* may not be *proper*.

None, I hope, not even the moſt *diſaffected*, will deny but there have been great Frauds committed by the BAKERS; the preſent *Lord Mayor* has puniſhed ſeveral of them *exemplarily* for their *Roguery*; but an effectual Way to prevent any ſuch Baſeneſs for the future, would be to clap an *Exciſeman* upon the Back of the Villains, and they will take Care we ſhall have our due *Weight*, *provided always* (as is ſaid in Acts of Parliament) we can get any *Bread* to *eat*.

A Glaſs of NEAT WINE, and a Pipe of PURE TOBACCO, muſt certainly be allow'd *excellent Bleſſings* in *Moderation*; and is not our *wiſe* and *beneficent M——* taking Care that we ſhall not *ſurfeit*; can we then be too thankful for *all theſe Bleſſings?* I think not. Beſide, I have not heard that there is any *Exciſe* deſigned on WATER, and all the World knows that is the *wholſomeſt Liquor* in the Univerſe; it is what our *Forefathers* drank before the *Flood*, and would we chuſe to live *better* than our *Forefathers*.

Noah, the firſt Planter of Vines, *drank Wine*, and what was the Fruits thereof? He got DRUNK, and diſcovered his own *Nakedneſs*; happy are we from whom it will be, in ſome meaſure, with-held. *Lot's Daughters* made him likewiſe drink *Wine*, and the Fruits thereof was, that he committed *Inceſt* with *them*, who then would covet ſo *miſchievous* and *pernicious* a Liquor?

Then who would, *my Brethren*, deſire to have his *full Swill* of a Beverage that is ſo much *Iniquity* and *Diſturbance?* How many noble Eſtates have been occaſioned by *Wine?* I cannot queſtion, whether moſt of the Eſtates

loſt

that is brought upon the World is not cauſed by that *exquiſite Incendiary*. How much then are we obliged to that *upright Man* who endeavours, as much as lies in his Power, to keep us from it.

I doubt not but by this Time you will think me one of *Job*'s *Comforters*; perhaps likewiſe you may imagine that I have been retained by the GREAT MAN, as well as ſeveral other *worthy Gentlemen*, but I would not have you miſtake me; I am only for *making the beſt of a bad Market*, and preaching *Patience upon Force*, if we ſhould be denied the *Juice of the Grape*, without the Inſpection of thoſe *enlighten'd Gentlemen* the *Officers* of the EXCISE.

I have already told you, *my Brethren*, that we ſhall neither be denied *Wine* nor *Tobacco*, after they have paſſed the Hands of theſe *Inquiſitors*; but I had almoſt forgot another Comfort which will accrue to us, and which I doubt not will rejoice your Hearts; I mean, that of not being either tried by a *Packed* or a *Special Jury*. No: if any Diſpute ſhould ariſe, you will be tried by thoſe *righteous Judges* the COMMISSIONERS of EXCISE; thoſe *Judges* to whom *Samuel* was a *Fool*, and *Eli little better*. 'Tis true, the latter had *Sons* who had more Wit, and would have the fingering of Money for SECRET SERVICES; and if any were ſo ill-bred to deny them their *Perquiſites*, they had the Senſe to help themſelves by *Force*.

They did not indeed take any Thing *themſelves*, *in propria Perſona*, but they had a MAN who was very well TUTOR'D, and who would TAKE it for them. This was an admirable *Convenience*, for he would have ſerved for a SCREEN in Caſe of *Neceſſity*, had they any but a *Prophet* to deal with. How happy is it for *one* that we have no *Prophets* now?

While I am upon this Head of *Prophets* and *Prophets Servants*, I would adviſe you all, *my Brethren*, to remember the Reward *Gehazi*, Servant to the Prophet *Eliſha*, met with, for taking *Money* and Change of *Garments* of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, when his Maſter had refuſed his Gifts. Did not he and his Seed remain *Lepers* for ever? And can ye expect better if ye receive the Wages of Iniquity, and *ſell* yourſelves for *Hire*? The Time will ſoon approach when your *Repreſentatives* will require your Voices in their Favour; remember then, *my Brethren*, thoſe who have *truly ſerv'd* you, thoſe who have been ſo *publick-ſpirited* as to *ſerve* you even againſt your Wills, and contrary to your *expreſs Deſires*, at the imminent Hazard of their Places and Penſions: They are the Men who have *deſerved well* at your Hands; let no *Bribes* therefore prevail with you againſt them; as they have already acquitted themſelves thus *faithfully*, you may depend upon it they will continue to render you the ſame *diſintereſted Services*. Theſe are them whom I would recommend to your *Choice* for the future; theſe are they whom it will become you to *honour*.

When Poſterity ſhall read the Hiſtory of the Tranſactions of the preſent Age, they will be aſtoniſhed at the many great Things that have been done for us within the Courſe of the laſt thirteen Years: I dare affirm, the moſt ſanguine among us durſt not have promiſed himſelf that he ſhould have ſeen what he at preſent ſees. *Peace* and *Plenty*, with a Land-Tax of but one Shilling in the Pound, and Eighteen Thouſand *honeſt Men*, beſide the *Officers* of the *Exciſe* and *Cuſtoms*, to guard our *Liberties*, are the leaſt of the Bleſſings we now enjoy, and in all Probability we may enjoy them much longer, unleſs we deprive ourſelves of them.

Notwithſtanding theſe, and many other Benefits too tedious to enumerate, there are ſome among us ſo thankleſs as to fly in the Faces of their Benefactors, and return them *Evil* for *Good*. The immenſe Eſtates they have acquired in a ſhort Time, with their fine Houſes, ſumptuous Furniture, ſplendid Equipages, and ſtately Gardens, are ſo many Eye-Sores to them. But I would fain ask theſe *Grumbletonians* whether the *Labourer is not worthy of his Hire*, and, whether they would have the Conſcience to deſire theſe Gentlemen to ſerve them for nothing? No, no; there never was a Cook yet but would lick his Fingers, and tho' ſeveral of them may have got Nine or Ten Thouſand a Year, what of all that? Is it not for our Credit to have ſuch Servants? And is it not a manifeſt Sign of our prodigious Wealth and Affluence? Let theſe *diſaffected Grumblers* go into *France* or *Holland*, and ſee if there are any ſuch Eſtates got in an Inſtant by ſerving the Publick; is not all this then for the Honour of *Great Britain*? it evidently is, deny it who can.

It is a common Obſervation, that too much Proſperity is apt to make Perſons *giddy*; juſt ſo it is with the People of *Great Britain*: while they were under continual Alarms from the *Pope* and *Pretender*, they grudged no Expences, nor no Eſtates that were then gotten. It is well known, that the late Duke of *Marlborough* acquired an immenſe Eſtate only by *breaking Peoples Bones*, and *killing* and *ſlaying*; and yet now we are apt to grumble at a *ſmall Pittance* that has been acquired by keeping us at Peace, as if Peace were not preferable to War.

Then the *Exciſe*, forſooth, ſticks in your Stomachs, and a deſperate Outcry is made about a *Standing Army* of *Officers*, when we have been aſſured, by a Gentleman who ought to know, that he will only deſire a farther *Levy* of an *Hundred and Fifty*, beſide *Warehouſe-keepers*, *&c.* Who but the *Diſaffected* would murmur at ſuch a Trifle? Beſide, what more could the Merchants deſire, if they know when they are well uſed, than to have their *Wines* and *Tobacco* kept ſafe for them under Lock and Key, ſo that none can get at them to embezzle them.

The Gentleman who ſtiles himſelf the *Occaſional Financer*, has proved, inconteſtably, that this *New Exciſe* will be the greateſt Bleſſing that ever happened to a Nation; that it will make us a *rich*, a *happy*, a *flouriſhing*, and a *healthy People*; and ſure none will offer to diſpute what one of ſuch *Ability*, *Learning*, *Honour*, and *Veracity* advances: But if it ſhould be queſtioned, there is *honeſt* Mr. *Caius* will ſwear for him, and that I hope will be a convincing Anſwer to the moſt *obſtinate* and *incredulous*. If *Riches* therefore and *Health* are two *invaluable Bleſſings*, as undoubtedly they are, what *Obligations* have we to *thoſe* who have ſo *generouſly* procured them for us, and that againſt our Wills.

But beſide *Health* and *Wealth*, there is another Bleſſing equally dear to an *Engliſhman*, and that is LIBERTY; this the ſame *worthy Gentleman* aſſures us will be *effectually* ſecured to us by the EXCISE upon *Wines* and *Tobacco*. How much are we obliged to that *prolifick Invention* that could contrive to ſecure our *Liberties* by an *Exciſe*? I believe none but himſelf would have thought on ſuch an *admirable Expedient*; but we may all be ſatisfied that his Brains are continually at work for our Goods.

How ſurprizing then, *my Brethren*, muſt it be to our Neighbours to hear, that almoſt all the People of *England* have been ſo *blind* to their own *Good*, as to make the moſt *earneſt Remonſtrances* againſt a Bill that was calculated to ſecure [illegible]

once, *Rich*, *Happy*, *Flouriſhing*, *Healthy*, and *Free*? But thus will it always be, while there are ſuch Seducers as *D'Anvers* and *Fog*.

I adviſe you all therefore to have an *implicit Faith* in the Writings of thoſe unerring Guides Meſſieurs *Walſingham* and *Osborne*; they will ſoon convince you that you are as *free* and as *happy* as it is poſſible for a People to be; and that we have the *wiſeſt*, the moſt *virtuous*, and moſt *upright M*—— that ever *leſs'd* a Nation. Liſten not therefore to any of the *Malecontents* or *Diſaffected*; believe not even your Ears nor your Eyes, nay truſt not even to your Feeling; that may deceive you, but the afore-mentioned Gentlemen never can; they are full as infallible in *Politicks*, as the POPE is in *Religion*, and you may rely with *equal Safety* upon the *one* as upon the *other*.

To draw towards a Concluſion, *my Brethren*, you may obſerve, that ſo long ago as before the *Birth* of our *Saviour*, it was *decreed*, *that all the World ſhould be* TAXED. Our *Saviour* himſelf, as it were, *paid* a TAX even in his Mother's Womb; he likewiſe *paid one* afterwards in his own Perſon, to ſhew us an Example of *Paſſive Obedience*, and ſhall we murmur at being a little EXCISED.

'Tis true, the *honourable Author* of a *Letter from a Member of Parliament to his Friends in the Country*, has allowed, *p.* 32, (and we may venture to believe him) that there are ſo *few* Places which are not *already* under Survey for ſome *exciſeable Commodity*, that the *additional* Number of Officers will not be conſiderable enough to create even a Murmur. And is not this a *mighty Comfort*, that almoſt every Body pays *Exciſe* already? I don't doubt but you all think it is. I would therefore give you all the ſame Advice which the famous *Eraſmus* gave to Sir *Thomas More*, on Account of a Horſe he had borrowed of him; *Crede quod habes & habes*; that is to ſay, *believe* yourſelves *happy* (in downright Contradiction to all your Senſes) and you *are ſo*. I ſhall conclude therefore, with recommending to you a *ſtrong implicit Faith*, with a *good Portion* of *Paſſive Obedience*, and a *conſiderable Quantity of Patience upon Horſe*; by the Help whereof, you will, in Time, be reconciled to your *preſent Happineſs*.

AN

HYMN,

To a Pſalm-Tune.

WHY do the People rage and foam,
And keep ſo great a Pother?
His Son why does the Father blame,
The Siſter ſhun her Brother?
Your ſcatter'd Senſes recollect,
If not entirely loſt;
Wou'd you refuſe Aſſiſtance, and
Be ſhipwreck'd on the Coaſt?

II.

EXCISE, you ſay, a Monſter is,
Alas! 'tis no ſuch Thing;
Tho I confeſs in Time it may
Bear in its Tail a *Sting*.
Your Gold you to Phyſicians give,
In hopes of gaining Health;
Your *Liberty* then to ſecure
Will you begrudge your Wealth.

III.

28 MR 59

Proſperity is apt to ſwell,
And fill us with ill Humours,
The beſt Specific is EXCISE
To purge away all Tumours.
EXCISE will keep us temperate,
How happy then are we!
Who from Exceſs of *Wine* and *Wealth*,
Shall in ſhort Time be free.

FINIS.